1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

given to the white woman when she returned from up river, yet with it all the thighs would still need to be cicatrized.

"Then," she said, speaking of the cicatrized thighs, "then he simply won't think of any one else, because among you, you will be the only one. We who all have the kamemba must see that it looks well, but you will be the only one."

3

The boys remained with us, amusing themselves by giving us their words for the various objects about us.

The strings about their waists, which formed their only clothing, the fiber cord with the bell about Sabape's neck, the word for garter, and machete, and shoes, boxes, and water jar, and all else they could see were named. A flashlight was a diamond fire, and a collapsible chair a hammock chair, and if we showed them something they had never seen it was a *Bakra sani*—a white man's thing.

Sabape spoke little, for he was a timid child and looked sluggish. He had but few cuts on his body, while Yamati, who was about the same age, had already several fully outlined designs.

"Why have you nothing about your neck, Yamati?"

"Oh, but I have. I have cuts. You can either have an obia cut, or an *obia tetai*—a string. It is to make us live. All children have it."

"And when do they start making kamemba?"

"A long time ago they start. If it doesn't hurt too much, they cut one more, and soon one more. But if it hurts too much, they wait until . . . ," he said, finishing on the word *te* . . . in the characteristic way of the grown narrator who uses the monosyllable to intensify space and time and danger and bounty.

Yamati found so much delight in his rôle as teacher that he became stern with us and had us say the words over again and again. There was the word for firefly which pleased him not at all. "*Mi taki, mi taki-e, azoka-nyenye*—I say, I am saying . . . " ("if you would but listen," his voice

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

534 nose instead of the mouth. The only other accompaniments of the dance are the anklets and bracelets of Kahee-seed rattles, in which the dried nuts add a sensuous, whispering sound to the lithe movements of the limbs.

● 195 There are three expressions used among Djukas which are equivalent to swearing among ourselves. These are: *Tinkee muffo,* stink mouth, which is the worst possible insult; and two other insulting terms of lesser degree, *T'jobo teefee,* dirty teeth, and *sika futu,* jigger foot.

/22 cont./

123 As a White one must enjoy great confidence among them if one wants to obtain permission to witness such solemnities. Never shall I forget the spectacle when I was present at such a festival; it took place from seven o'clock in the evening until two o'clock in the morning. During all this time I found myself in a very unpleasant state of tension. Although I found myself far from the part inhabited by us (namely the town of Paramaribo) in the deep forest alone in their midst, I was nevertheless not afraid because of my positive conviction of my influence over them. I was not at ease that night, however, and were it not for the fact that I did not want to hinder them or show them that I did not feel at ease at this solemnity, I would have departed, however eager I was to see the result of the movements. I remained, however, until all had come to an end, both for the distinction that fell to me for /23/ having been allowed to be present there and in order not to offend the trust put in me, while to myself I rejoiced at being able later to give to others the description of this solemnity.

Chapter XIV

Language, Odo, and Narratives (1)

538 1. Odo, proverb; narratives are called fori, and tales anansi-tori.

197 Their language is the Negro English customarily spoken here, but in a singsong tone with a peculiar accent.

195 As proof that during the conversation they understand you well, they constantly repeat "Yaa!"

551 When a child is born among them, aside from a general name they also give it a day name, in which for them special meanings are concealed, for instance:

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153 791 787 [195] In proportion as the pupil perfects himself, the god expresses itself more easily with the help of his body, begins to do coordinated acts and to speak. They say that the gita has been "arranged" (seeka). The Kumẽnti speak with a gruff, jerky voice, characteristic, which humorists love to imitate in the evenings' recitals.

In order to call on his gita voluntarily, the pupil crouches down, feet together, throwing pamba from right to left at the level of his feet and uttering the formula: "O Kumẽnti, djumpo ku a mi." Then he remains immobile in this position and waits; possession takes place generally at the end of a few minutes.

776 787 The Kumẽnti which enter thus into men are exclusively male gods; it is known that they have wives because they talk about them, but they never manifest themselves.

[812] The Kumẽnti are generally benevolent; still, no more than any divinity of the Refugee Blacks, do they represent a principle of goodness and justice in itself. They watch in a partial fashion over the interests of their bearers. Thus it is that A..., of the Dipélu II lo, has a Kumẽnti which reacts in a violent way when it has the impression that danger threatens [158] its bearer. It enters into him suddenly, takes a machete and storms through the village, while people prudently barricade themselves in their houses.

787 789 In certain circumstances, when their trances are particularly intense, the people possessed by Kumẽnti are capable, it is said, of walking in fire, dancing on broken glass, climbing thorny awara palm trees, and even having themselves struck with blows of a machete without any wound resulting from it. Professor de Goeje gives impressive personal testimony on this subject, such as the case of a possessed man who overturned a pail of boiling water on his body (1). Mr. Mathieu, Director of

1. In a note in Mr. W.F. van Lier's work, § 37.